

four languages have had their turn. The head mistress of this school is German, the great majority of the pupils Italian and German, the races being often mixed in the same individual. The French girls are a small minority, yet French is the favoured language amongst the pupils. There are few wholly English girls, but these are provided with an English mistress, and their language by no means neglected. The difficulty of bringing together for the same course of instruction children of different race, habits, characteristics, religion, and language may well seem almost insuperable, but it has been surmounted not only in the girls' school, but in that organised for boys on the same principle, in the same town; and this is equally excellent and successful with that for girls, although regulated in rather a different manner. One cannot but think that what appears a smaller difficulty—that of teaching foreign languages in a useful manner to our insular children—might be surmounted likewise.



Home and School in Germany.

BY MRS. CAUMONT, *Author of "The Hanleys," &c.*

Doubtless the reason why the German designates his mother-country "The Fatherland" is to be sought for in the fact that he lives under a paternal, not to say patriarchal, form of government. In the regular routine of every-day life in Germany, we are brought face to face with "the powers that be"; we are ever conscious of the firm, kind hand of authority, supporting, controlling, and exacting obedience from the subject. In no respect, however, is this more thoroughly demonstrated than with regard to *the school*, and all pertaining to it. Nor does *the home* lose one particle of its influence in consequence.

From the time when the great Frederick enforced the instruction of the people, the system has extended and developed; and at the present moment compulsory education is recognised as a national blessing from one end of Germany to the other. For history has shown us how far the practical, commonplace possessions of reading, writing, and arithmetic have stood the test better than an unlimited supply of liberty, equality, and fraternity.

When the little Teuton comes into the world, and has been duly registered, christened, and vaccinated, the good house-doctor, smiling benignantly down at the bundle in the cradle, turns to the father, and says, "That will do, until he begins school, this day six years."

"What!" exclaims the young mother, aghast, "they will dare to rob me of my darling in six years? Oh, no, I shan't let him enter that horrid 'Stadt-schule' until he is a big, big boy!"

"My dear lady," says the doctor, "your son will some day be a soldier. Would you wish to have him three years at the barracks as an underling, or only one year as reserve

officer? Take my advice, and send him through his classes like the others, until, at fifteen, he gains his right to only one year's service. And, if he is to make a good start in life, take proper care of him now. Open air, wholesome food, and exercise are the best medicines; give him lots of all three for the next six years, and remember that his career is in your hands!"

I know of one German who cried for an hour the night before her little lad entered the lowest form of a public school. Max was the pet of the household, a curly-locked, blue-eyed, laughing, loving little lump of nonsense; his father called him a wee ragamuffin, and his dear mamma was wont to style him "her best and her bonniest, her sweetest heart's treasure." It was a cruel sin to send such a darling to a public day-school!

Nevertheless, when the morning came, our young Frau Mamma put a brave face on, harnessed Master Maxie in his brand-new top-boots, and knapsack, containing a slate, sponge, copy-book, pencil, and pen, all fresh from the stationer's; tied her bonnet-strings, and, taking her child by the hand, set off with him to the large institution where his name was already inscribed as one of the scholars. It was nine o'clock a.m., and the first day of the school-term. The reception of the new pupils assumed the nature of a ceremony suggestive of a confirmation or christening. The parents sat in the common hall of the school, with their little ones beside them; the director and "class masters" occupied the platform in front. A group of little boys of one of the lower forms opened the proceedings with a *chorale*. As they filed in singly, and took their places, the mothers and fathers instinctively glanced from these orderly little men to the nursery cherubs beside them.

What a contrast! *There* was silence, neatness, and prompt obedience, *here* was the raw material, as represented by laughter and tears, grimaces and perpetual motion.

An impressive address was delivered to the parents, especially to the mothers, which brought tears to the eyes of our young Frau Mamma, it was so pathetic and so earnest. She had, since her marriage, read of a little French lad called "Jack" in a story by Monsieur Daudet; and, as she thought of him now, and of the day when his mother put him to school, a tear rolled down her cheek, a big, hot tear of gratitude that her boy was welcomed here to-day, not first refused

—then tolerated—like poor innocent little Jack! "The Director appeals to us mothers to help him in his task," she repeated, as she walked home alone, "and we shall do our part. What other boys do, my Max can do."

The German school-boy is placed under the special care of his "class-master," a personage whose importance presently surpasses that of papa, mamma, the family doctor, and "Herr Director" himself. Max swears by young Dr. Schwarzbrett; he adores him; he trembles before him; he greets him with effusion in the street; he raves about him all day long, and sometimes in the night. For the young "class-master" has become a sort of *de facto* godfather to the little lad. He feels his responsibility, and acts up to it. He watches him and his companions in the school-hours, during their play-time, and on half-holidays, when he will sometimes take them all out for an expedition to the forest or the hill-side. The consequence is, that in a very short time Dr. Schwarzbrett understands his little men thoroughly, their childish virtues and frailties, their difficulties and their proclivities, their conceits and their distastes; and he is in the best position to guide and help. For the little fellows regard him as a sort of young uncle, whose "chief end" is to settle their disputes, punish, reward, and govern them; and they are disposed in consequence to yield him a certain amount of hero-worship.

The German mother may never have beheld the class-master; but she appreciates his services, and recognises in him a moral aid in the education of her child. Her esteem for the public school rises, and develops into a sort of reverence, as she observes reflected in her own household the order and punctuality so rigorously maintained in the class-room.

A friend of mine in England has two fine lads, who reside at home and attend the public school. They are clever handsome boys, both, and so full of life and spirits that it is a pleasure to look at them. The parents are proud of them, and are never more delighted than when people shower compliments upon their "Reggie and Howard."

Of late, however, a small cloud has appeared on the domestic horizon. Poor Mr. and Mrs. Robinson have got a grievance which annoys and irritates the whole family at every turn.

The butler will tell you that he has *his* share of it attending table, and that it is "all along o' Master Reginald and Master

Howard." It appears that at school the lads' classical master has cheated them! They declare he has, and they must know.

"Papa," begins Mrs. Robinson, in tearful accents, "that Mr. Scott has something against our boys. His marks are excessively unjust, and it is evident he has taken a prejudice against poor Reggie and Howard. Either that, or, between ourselves, he must be a little silly, this Mr. Scott."

"Right you are there, mother!" cry the two young gentlemen in a breath. "Mr. Scott is a *muff*, and he can't abide us. Bob Jackson told me so; and he favours Bob and all the other fellows. It's a downright shame!"

"Indeed then," exclaims Mr. Robinson, with cheeks aflame, "I shall go to-morrow morning myself to the head master, and have the matter investigated. You may be sure I shan't sit coolly by and see my sons tyrannised over or 'sat upon' by any Mr. Scott! He shall be dismissed first."

In Germany the fact that the schoolmaster's position and income are determined and administered by the Council of Education, carries with it a double advantage, first, that the connection between the teacher and his pupil is no longer the sordid relationship of employer and employed; but what it ought to be, that of instructor and scholar; and secondly, that the parents are guaranteed the services of the most capable, disinterested and best-qualified set of men, who, without fear or favour, or respect of persons, devote themselves to the education of their children.

It sometimes does occur that German parents insist on carrying on their little one's instruction under their own roof; but, of course, this is the exception, as the law of the land, after a certain time, invariably demands some positive proof that a sufficient amount of knowledge has been acquired by the youthful subject. And the penalty for falling below this standard—a standard, by the way, easily attainable by every normally-gifted lad—is the three years' military service.

The sisters of Max, Karl, and Hermann are also taken into consideration by the Council of Education. Of course there is no question here of military service, yet a liberal education of a horribly old-fashioned description—in which knitting and darning replace Latin and Greek—is duly provided for the girls, with professors and teachers of equal standing and erudition to those in the boys' schools.

Prizes in the form of wreaths, medals, books, and cheques, as in France and England, are generally contrary to the ideas of German pedagogy; but the diligent parents and guardians receive their due reward at the end of each half year, when examination day arrives.

Then the great front doors of the stone-finished *Töchter Schule* are thrown open; up the wide staircase, decorated with greenery, throng the fathers and mothers to see the results of patient home toil. First, they find the pupils' drawings and paintings arranged in a large room for inspection, and also the needlework, from the humblest description up to the most æsthetic. Neatly mounted, and with her name on the card attached, in large round-hand, is the six-year-old Mariechen's square of knitting, side by side with tall Fräulein Irma's elaborately-designed fire-screen, in plush and chenille. The plain darning and patching, the crotched mittens for the poor at Christmas, all have their place in the show-room, and invest it with an indescribable resemblance to many of the young folks' own real homes.

In another part of the building a little lady in long plaits recites a passage in English from Longfellow's "Evangeline," whilst in the class-room close by two tiny creatures are holding a dialogue in French. The parents return home satisfied, and fully rewarded for all their pains during the last six months.

The schools in Germany are the pith of the Empire. If you want to estimate the nation—its patience, perseverance, and real power—visit the schools. Here you have the most approved systems, the latest inventions, the happiest discoveries, all in full working order, in the hands of men who have elevated the very art of imparting information to a foremost rank amongst the modern sciences.

The parents, if they pay attention, learn quite as much from the school as the children do. Not more than a score of years have elapsed since our neighbours, Herr and Frau Fritz Hofmann, trudged twice a day under the tall poplars, and across the Platz, books in hand, to the "Gymnasium" and the *Höhere Töchter-Schule*. "We thought we learned a great deal in those days, husband," says the former. "Yes," replies the latter, "it was generally supposed that a 'primaner' knew everything." "But tell me," cries Frau Hofmann, "tell me

what our Victor will be like when he is a 'primaner?' He is in 'tertia' now, and I am positively afraid to hear him. Why, Fritz, they dissected a hare in his class this morning. And he says they must know by the tiniest bone Herr Professor shows them, to what animal it belongs, and all about it. Husband, dear, how far is this sort of thing to go on? Is there no danger of our darling Victor getting bald, or turning grey, or becoming a withered-up old man before ever he reaches the University?"

"Not the slightest risk, my dear," cries Herr Hofmann, laughing; "boys' heads nowadays can hold a deal more information than they used to do, because, you see, it is so neatly packed for them beforehand. Long ago we had to do the packing ourselves. Never fear for Victor, any more than for little Hedwig, who can add up her fractions, and convert her *marks* into francs, shillings, and dollars with such an uncanny rapidity."

Her children's progress was evidently making a certain impression on Frau Hofmann, and the final triumph was attained when she had convinced herself that their health in nowise suffered therefrom.

I remember once visiting a school, in which these words were inscribed on the wall in large characters: "Order is Heaven's first law." The boys in that seminary were, I believe, as happy and as good as any boys out of Heaven could possibly be; but as for the "law" and the "order," I am afraid it was *not only* in the mathematical class that these counted amongst the unknown quantities, *x*, *y*, *z*!

The young Teuton regards his school as the very embodiment of order. However untidy, unpunctual, or disorderly the household at home may be, "Wilhelmchen" and "Wilhelm-inchen," once within the class-room, and side by side with their school comrades, resolve themselves into the most correct little creatures in the world. By and by they go home, and unwittingly preach a sermon to the grown-ups around the dinner table, by the great tiled fire-place, or under the balcony awning, as the case may be. "Auntie, we are not allowed to dog-ear our books like that!" "It is strictly forbidden to put a drop of water in the ink, mamma!" "Herr Braun says I *must* have a clean sponge to my slate, and my copy-book *must* be sewn." . . . In our neighbourhood there is a

villa occupied by a German lady and her husband, the parents of four little lads, "like steps of stairs," who all attend the same school. There is one large room upstairs, which has been fitted up quite recently, and which at first sight looks uncommonly like a duodecimo edition of Herr Braun's class-room in the *Stadt Schule*. Four newly-varnished oak-stained school desks—or rather combinations of desks and seats—of different heights, graduated to suit the sizes of the little students, are there, with four little lamps, exactly alike. On the wall hang the four satchels, with their respective slates and sponges, and pencil-cases, and four little knitted dusters. In the long winter evenings, when the stars shine out early, and the sledges have had their turn over the crisp snow on the garden walks, and are safely stowed away inside the old arbour, the four little lamps are lighted upstairs, the logs crackle in the stove, the new ventilator at the window top is thrown open, and, as the ruddy-cheeked youngsters enter and glance round, we are forcibly reminded of the "Story of the Little Bears"—"And who has been here since I've been gone? Who has been sitting at *my* little desk? Who has been reading in *my* little book?" Ah! little bears, the home fairy has been peeping into your ink bottles, and filling them up for you; her deft fingers have pointed your pencils and covered your grammars, and whilst you are at work, she will be sewing the buttons on your jackets, downstairs.

Little bears, you have carried home more from the *Stadt-Schule* than you are aware of; new notions for the house-mother as to light and air, and bodily exercise, food, and clothing! What is demonstrated at the school is carried into practice at home. The school and the home are never in conflict, nor ever contrasted—not even in the surliest little bear's imagination. They depend upon each other, and they complete one another.

The stranger who takes up his residence for any length of time in Germany, if he be endowed with observation at all, must quickly be convinced of the actual part the school occupies in the everyday life amongst all classes of the community. The people are proud of it as an institution—the one institution which dissolves the barriers between the rich and the poor, exacting, as it does, the same obedience from the child of the castle and of the cottage.

In every household which contains a schoolboy or schoolgirl, the family arrangements must be modified and adapted, more or less, to that young person's studies. The hours for rising and retiring, the meal-times, the seasons for excursions, journeys, and invitations, all give precedence to the school programme.

The good German mother forgets her physical ailments, her "nervous headache," "palpitations," and "dyspepsia," to rise, like Thackeray's Waterloo heroine, the immortal Mrs. Major O'Dowd, and give her children their coffee at seven in winter and six in summer. For has she not to equip her young soldiers, too, for their day's struggle with equations and French participles! And not only the little house-mother, but each member of the family, contributes his quota to the furtherance of the good work, until the home becomes, what the school is, a busy beehive! The very servant-maid has her almanack suspended on the kitchen wall, and knows when "Besuchs Tag" (Visitors' Day) at the school comes round to have an extra-polished pair of boots and an extra-stiffly-starched collar in readiness for her little Master Hellmuth's adornment.

I remember once meeting at a coffee-party two charming girls with their mother. It was about the beginning of November, and the conversation turned upon concerts, public lectures, the approaching Christmas season, parties, and dances.

"I hope you two will have a very pleasant winter of it," said our hostess, addressing the young ladies. "At the ages of twenty and twenty-one, and with constitutions like our Olga and Emmchen here, one can imagine nothing more welcome than a whole sheaf of invitations."

"Ah!" interposed the young ladies' mother, "my Olga and Emma have, of their own free will, taken the virtuous resolution to abstain from everything of the sort this winter, for the sake of Fritz. You know, the poor boy has his matriculation examination coming off at Easter. It is his last "half" at the "Gymnasium," and his sisters declare that if he does not succeed they shall never forgive themselves. They won't go to a single dance without him; and, of course, for him, it is out of the question this year. But they shall all make up for it next year, when Fritz is a student."

Brother Fritz was a lad of eighteen, a bright, happy-hearted fellow, fond enough of his studies when he was at them; but very easily diverted by the delights of charade-acting, *tableau-*

vivants, skating, and dancing. It would take a whole reserve ammunition of home influence to bring him out victorious in the final examination at the end of this last school-year.

His sisters loved him so dearly, their one brother, their Fritzchen; what were all the gaieties in the world compared to his success! Not one shade of regret or disappointment at having to forego a whole season's amusement was discernible on their sweet young faces. It never occurred to them that there could indeed be any special self-denial in their acting, for once, as their dear mother had done all her life. I have seen some girls who would be inclined to pronounce Olga and Emma stupid; the mother stupid; and the boy the most stupid of all, for interfering with people's pleasure in this manner—as if balls and parties were not, after all, of more vital importance than a lad's examination!

These same people are inclined to stigmatise all German society as "a bore"; and yawn over any book depicting the life of the middle-class average German family. There is an "absence of spiciness," they complain, and "an old-fashioned staidness" about the whole, "which grows wearisome." They may be right; but mark, at the same time, that the society about which there is little startling to relate, which possesses none of the elements of the dreadful, the eccentric, the adventurous, is a healthy society! There is, after all, something *noble* in the hourly conflict with little things; in the patient performing of daily tasks; in the surmounting of difficulties, bit by bit; and persevering steadfast to the end, without looking for any special reward in return, save the satisfaction of duty well done!

We have been too long accustomed to regard our Teutonic neighbours as a nation of abstract philosophers and dreamy theorists. In reality, Germany is the land of thinkers and workers. Here, carefully-devised systems for the public improvement are put to the test, and, according to their practical merit, adopted or rejected. Every new law, once it has been sanctioned at headquarters, is actually put into execution and enforced without exception.

If the law be a good one, the people are intelligent enough to welcome it as such, and to yield it their loyal obedience; if it is not a good one in their estimation, they have patience at least to wait for its amendment. We must respect a people

who have acquired this power of self-control, and who impress their own inherited ideas of duty and of order on their little ones from their earliest childhood.

Great Britain has her own traditions and her own institutions, and can get along remarkably well without either Military Service or Compulsory Education.

But many English homes have yet to learn the value of time—not the “time” which “is money,” but the days’, months’, and years’ time of their children’s youth, upon the use of which the virtue, happiness, and success of the future men and women so entirely depend.

If we have first-rate schools throughout our land, let us support them as the Germans do, with the full *prestige* of home influence! The parent who underrates his child’s teacher, underrates his child; and the mother who banishes her boy to a public school, merely to get rid of him, by and by—when the young man returns home—becomes *herself* the victim to compulsory education of a very different kind from that which we have been describing in this little paper!

We have seen how much importance they attach beyond the Rhine to the fundamentals of learning, to the minutest details in a little child’s half-hour’s task. Let us “take a wrinkle” from them there, if in nothing else!

How particular the young English mother, or good elder sister, can be about her little ones’ *outward* appearance! She picks up new patterns; she studies the latest designs in bewitching little coats, and jaunty little jackets and tunics. She spares no pains to have her darling little man and woman the bonniest of the bonnie. She will plan and contrive, and sit up late with her needle; she will even flatter the tailor, wheedle the haircutter, and bribe the photographer’s apprentice to accomplish her laudable ends. But when the more important part arrives, namely, the cultivation of the little folks’ hearts and minds, does she always display the same amount of maternal solicitude?

Our English schools are good, and work well. Perhaps they might work even better, were the home authorities and the school authorities always to act hand in hand—consistently supporting one another, and helping each other in their common task of educating the young.

A Sprig of Groundsel.

BY DR. J. E. TAYLOR, F.L.S., &c., *Editor of "Science Gossip."*

It is a little humble weed, common in badly-kept gardens and by roadsides. Its flowers have no beauty that we should desire them. They bid not for entomological notice by large gay blossoms or sweet perfumes. The groundsel is a Lazarus among flowering plants, growing where they cannot grow, and often on the crumbs which fall from the tables of its richer brethren. Everybody knows it, but nobody notices it, except the canary-fancier, who will gather handfuls of it for his bird-pets to make their dessert off.

The groundsel (*senecio vulgaris*) has not even any far-reaching traditions of medical virtues to commend it to human notice. To all intents and purposes it is a Pariah among plants, living on suffrage, living where it can, not where it would like to. It is a floral bankrupt, notwithstanding its high-ranked ancestry and existing blood relations.

I confess to a liking for these vegetable ne’er-do-weels! They are confined to no particular order of plants. You find them among the most lowly as well as among the most florally exalted groups. They represent the keenness and bitterness of the Battle of Life, even in the vegetable kingdom. No quarter is given, the weakest go to the wall! The rocks of the earth’s crust are literally crammed with *extinct* species of animals and plants. These represent the kinds which could not compete with new comers, or the new physical and biological changes in their surroundings. First they became scarce, then rare, perhaps they grew dwarfed and in other ways impoverished, so that one would hardly have recognised them among their more flourishing and robust ancestors.